February 2002

Shellfish Connections

A Newsletter
from
The Office of Food Safety & Shellfish Programs

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Rainfall Closures

This is the time of year when we close Conditionally Approved growing areas more frequently due to rainfall events. Through our water quality studies, we have determined that seven growing areas do not consistently meet the fecal coliform standards following moderate or heavy rainfall events. Each of these areas is closed to harvest when a specific 24-hour rainfall total is exceeded. The areas and their closure amounts are listed below:

- Filucy Bay – 0.5 inch rain closes the area for 5 days
- The Elk River area of Grays Harbor -1.0 inch rain closes the area for 7 days
- Henderson Inlet - 0.5 inch rain closes the southern half of the inlet for 5 days
- Nisqually Reach - 1.0 inch rain closes the area for 5 days
- North Bay - 0.5 inch rain closes the area for 5 days
- Oakland Bay – 1.0 inch rain closes the area for 5 days
- South Skagit Bay – 0.5 inch rain closes the area for 5 days

Rainfall can also indirectly close areas if it causes a sewage treatment plant or its collection system to become overloaded and discharge untreated or partially treated wastewater. Wastewater treatment plant operators must immediately notify our office whenever that happens. Any plant failing to notify our office can face fines by the Department of Ecology.

Our office also closes areas when floods occur. Annas Bay near the mouth of the Skokomish River is the growing area most frequently affected by floods.

If you have questions about closures caused by rain or floods, contact Don Melvin at (360) 236-3320 or don.melvin@doh.wa.gov.

Fecal Status and Trends

Did You Know?

- DOH has determined status and trends of fecal pollution in 43 commercial shellfish growing areas of Puget Sound through March 2000.
- Eighty-four percent of over 700 stations in the 43 areas were categorized as **GOOD**. The remaining stations (located in 26 of the 43 areas) had some measure of significant fecal pollution impact (i.e., **FAIR** or **BAD**).
- The 26 "impacted" growing area were ranked. South Skagit and Samish bays showed the greatest impact.
- Fecal pollution significantly increased at 104 of 226 stations (46%) in the 26 "impacted" areas. Sixty-one stations (27%) improved.

These facts and interesting details on each of the 26 "impacted" areas are contained in *Status and Trends in Fecal Coliform Pollution in Puget Sound Year 2000*, a report prepared for the Puget Sound Ambient Monitoring Program. Copies may be obtained by contacting Tim Determan at (360) 236-3311 or tim.determan@doh.wa.gov. It can also be viewed online from our publications web page at www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/sfpubs.htm.

Shellfish Work Group Formed

The Department of Health recently initiated the development of a special work group that is focusing on preventing shellfish area downgrades. Members of the work group include industry, tribal, state, local, and nonprofit representation. They have identified three key areas of focus: funding for local pollution control programs, communication with media and communities, and improving early detection and warning of impending problems in shellfish growing areas.

For more information contact Wayne Clifford at (360) 236-3307 or wayne.clifford@doh.wa.gov.

HACCP Class Held

The Department held a HACCP training course on July 19 & 20, 2001. Attendees participated in a day and a half training to satisfy the requirement of Chapter X.01.I, Training. The instruction received during this training class qualifies the attendees to conduct a Process Flow Chart, Hazard Analysis, and HACCP Plan. Attention to FDA rules, hazards, associated records for SSOP/GMP, and other record keeping requirements were presented. The attendees were as follows:

Company Represented	Individual
Arcadia Point	Steve Wilson
Bar Harbor	Ricky Tellez
Blaine Cold Storage	Katherine Edwards
DOH	Cari Franz-West
Harstine Oyster	Patsy Glaser-Gibson
Marinelli Shellfish	Genaro Mercado
Quality Alaska	David Christenson
Tulalip Tribe	Adam Brisbois
Tulalip Tribe	Joseph Hatch
Tulalip Tribe	Michael McHugh
Weigardt Brothers	Margaret Lazaro

SSO Update

The Department must have a State Standardization Officer (SSO) as directed by the National Shellfish Sanitation Program (NSSP). This position is required in order to provide the necessary standardization of state inspectors according to training guidelines of the FDA. Currently, Jessie DeLoach is the Department's SSO. Mr. DeLoach recently completed the extensive standardization training program and field standardization portion with the FDA, qualifying him as an SSO. Mr. DeLoach is also the Lead Inspector for the Inspection Program.

Recent License Actions

Mandarina Canadian Enterprises,
owner Thomas Hui, not licensed.

Notice of Intent to deny shellfish operation license application and assess civil penalties mailed on March 8, 2001. Alleged violations include multiple events of operating without a license, mistagging, and failure to have a required Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point Plan. Civil penalties were assessed in the amount of $5,150. This matter was resolved according to the terms and conditions of a Stipulation, Agreement, and Order.

Are you licensed as a harvester? If so, your license is about to expire! See article on page 5 for more information.

Annual FDA Audit

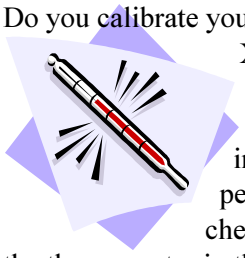
The FDA completed their 2001 annual audit of our shellfish program to evaluate our state's compliance with the NSSP. In addition to a review of our growing areas, biotoxin monitoring plan, and enforcement components, 10 shellfish firms were jointly audited by FDA and our state standardization officer.

Results of the audit showed that we need to improve our industry compliance with the HACCP plan requirements of the NSSP. Many of the audited firms are using outdated HACCP plans that don't reflect the required critical control points, critical limits or monitoring frequencies. Some of the plans reviewed did not accurately reflect the actual process used by the firms. As a result of the audit, we will be emphasizing HACCP compliance in future inspections with all firms.

Another area identified as needing improvement was follow-up on correction schedules established during routine inspections. We will be evaluating our current process for follow-ups and look for ways to improve it.

Overall the audit was helpful in pointing out areas where we and the industry can improve. We will be addressing these issues with all firms during regular inspections.

Thermometer Calibration



Do you calibrate your thermometer? NSSP, Chapter X.01.G (1) (b) requires that ongoing verification activities include the calibration of process-monitoring instruments. This means that the personal pocket thermometer(s) used to check shellstock internal temperatures and the thermometer in the storage cooler (on the dial next to the door or hanging on inside wall) used to indicate the ambient room temperature need to be calibrated. The results (actual values) of both of these calibrations are to be recorded onto a monitoring record. Each firm should have a monitoring record for all thermometers used. Thermometers should be calibrated on a regular basis to assure that they are accurate. Accuracy is determined based on the manufacturers specifications. A variance of plus or minus 2-3 degrees is adequate. The test for thermometer accuracy is using the "cold or hot water bath method." Ask your inspector to show you this method or for other assistance to help meet this requirement.

Clarification of Records Format

Recently, Department Inspectors have been advising firms about "format" for monitoring records that need to be properly maintained according to the NSSP, Chapter X.01.H, Records:

All records required by sections .01 (HACCP) and .02 (Sanitation) shall include:

(a) The name and location of the dealer;
(b) The <u>date and time</u> of the activity that the record reflects; and
(c) The signature or initials of the person performing the operations.

What this means is that dealers (shellstock shippers and shucker-packer firms) who fill out SSOP monitoring records for the daily check of the 8 points of sanitation must have the person who does the monitoring initial the record <u>and mark the time</u> at which the check was made. Other HACCP records (process monitoring records, temperature checks, calibration records) must also follow this same procedure. If you have any questions about record format requirements, ask your assigned inspector to assist you.

Wet Storage Explained

In our last issue of "Shellfish Connections Inspectors' Corner" dated May 2001, we attempted to explain the new requirements for Wet Storage. However, we have heard many comments stating that some people are still confused regarding our new WAC 246-282-042, Wet Storage Permit requirements and general Wet Storage Plan requirements. The following hopefully will alleviate this confusion.

Wet Storage is a temporary storage of harvested shellstock within a growing area. However, there are some subtle differences that need to be further explained as follows:

A. If you harvest shellstock from a growing area and approved harvest site where you bag, tag, cage, or crate them and then leave them in the same harvest site location where you harvested them, i.e., on the beach or sink float then – THIS IS NOT WET STORAGE.
   - ✓ You <u>do not</u> need a <u>wet storage plan</u>
   - ✓ You <u>do not</u> need a <u>wet storage permit</u>

B. If you harvest shellstock from one growing area and approved harvest site and relocate them to a different growing area and approved harvest site, or you relocate them within the same growing area but to a new harvest site within that approved growing area listed on your license then – THIS IS WET STORAGE.
   - ✓ You <u>do</u> need a <u>wet storage plan</u>
   - ✓ You <u>do not</u> need a <u>wet storage permit</u>.

C. If you operate an on-shore re-circulating system then – THIS IS WET STORAGE.
   - ✓ You <u>do</u> need a <u>wet storage plan</u>
   - ✓ You <u>do</u> need a <u>wet storage permit</u>.

D. If you operate an on-shore flow-through system then – THIS IS WET STORAGE.
   - ✓ You <u>do</u> need a <u>wet storage plan</u>
   - ✓ You <u>do</u> need a <u>wet storage permit</u>

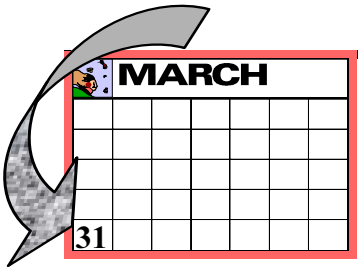
E. If you wet store imported shellstock from another state in approved growing waters/approved harvest site on your license, re-circulating system or flow through system then – THIS IS WET STORAGE.
   - ✓ You <u>do</u> need a <u>wet storage plan</u>
   - ✓ You <u>do</u> need a <u>wet storage permit</u>

Dredges/Vessels

The NSSP requires all harvesters to adhere to Chapter VIII.02.B, Vessels, for the sanitation condition of their dredges/vessels. Specific concerns are the general sanitation condition and controls on board while in port or underway. These concerns include unsanitary conditions from debris, birds, or equipment. Shellstock must be protected from unsanitary or adverse conditions. Washing of dredge/vessel boat decks must be performed in approved growing waters or from approved/potable water sources. Each harvester is required to maintain an approved Marine Sanitary Device (porta-potty) while harvesting. Proper pump out of the contents must be done at a designated pump out station or sewer facility. Please assist the Department by properly maintaining your harvest dredges/vessels.

Change in License Renewal and Expiration Dates for HAs

Harvesters Please Note! If you are licensed as a Harvester (you can tell by the suffix on your license number, i.e., WA-9999-*HA*), the expiration date of your license has changed.



The license year for a Shellfish Operation License and Certificate of Approval has traditionally been October 1st through September 30th for all license types. The March 2001 revision of Chapter 246-282 WAC changed the license timeframe for the Harvester (HA) classification. The new license year for HAs will be from April 1st of every year through March 31st of the next year.

To accommodate this change, we have implemented a transition period. All HAs who renewed their shellfish operation license last fall paid half of the annual fee, and were issued a 6-month license, effective for the period October 1, 2001 through March 31, 2002. In early January and again in February 2002, all licensed HAs were sent a packet to renew their shellfish operation license. Once renewed, these licenses will be effective for a full year, April 1st through March 31st. (The license fee will be the full amount, or $250.) From that point forward, renewal packets for HAs will be sent in January of each year, and Harvester licenses will be effective April 1st through March 31st.

Please note all other shellfish operation license effective dates will remain the same. If you operate as a Shellstock Shipper (SS) or Shucker Packer (SP), the expiration date of your license is still September 30 of each year.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding the Harvester Classification change, please contact our office at (360) 236-3330.

PAC RIM ATTENDEES - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

This year's Pacific Rim Shellfish Sanitation Conference is scheduled for **April 3-4** in Silverdale, Washington.

Silverdale Hotel, circa 1900
(photo courtesy of Kitsap County Historical Society Museum)

Additional information regarding hotel reservations and agenda items will be sent out as soon as it becomes available.

Domoic Acid

Third Quarter 2001

The ORHAB algal bloom monitoring effort off Twin Harbors and Long Beach indicated a sharp rise in domoic acid-producing algae in August. A sharp rise in toxin levels in the clams followed closely behind the algal bloom spike. In early September, razor clams from Mocrocks and Copalis experienced a sudden elevation in domoic acid levels. The toxin level in the Mocrocks sample reached 52ppm and the Copalis sample peaked at 44ppm. It is interesting to note that by the time the clam toxin levels peaked, the plankton population had collapsed to near non-existent. Fortunately, the clam toxin levels also dropped dramatically, which allowed a fall razor clam season.

In the third quarter of the year, there were three Puget Sound samples with detectable levels of domoic acid. Blue mussels at Edmonds Marina in Snohomish County and Zittel's Marina in Thurston County each contained 1ppm of domoic acid. Blue mussels at Birch Bay Village in Whatcom County contained <1ppm of domoic acid.

Fourth Quarter 2001

The ORHAB algal bloom monitoring for the coast continued to show near non-existent levels of domoic acid producing algae for the fourth quarter of 2001. The razor clams continued to drop in toxin as well, with most samples reporting single digit toxin levels. This allowed the recreational harvest of razor clams to continue as planned, without any interruptions.

PSP

Third Quarter 2001

July brought closures to many traditional PSP areas of the state as well as some first ever closures in South Puget Sound. During this period, Hammersley Inlet in Mason County and Totten and Eld Inlets in Thurston County experienced PSP closures for the first time on record.

In the north, Whatcom, San Juan, and Skagit counties began with partial area closures; by the end of the month those counties were closed entirely. Central Puget Sound fared slightly better with closures in north King County and south Snohomish County. The PSP bloom in Kitsap County was so extensive that it closed the entire east side of the county. The South Puget Sound bloom that began at the beginning of June in Carr Inlet expanded in July to include all of Pierce County South of Gig Harbor. The bloom in Thurston County expanded from the Nisqually Reach area to close the entire county. In Mason County, the bloom eventually reached the entire county except Oakland Bay and Hood Canal.

By August, some of the blooms in North Puget Sound had begun to dissipate. Whatcom and Skagit counties began to lift closures. However, the blooms in the San Juan Islands continued to rise. In Central Puget Sound, the King County closure expanded to include Vashon Island. Many sites in Kitsap County also produced more toxic shellfish in August. In Jefferson County, PSP blooms closed more areas in the Port Ludlow area and Discovery Bay. The South Puget Sound bloom peaked during the first week in August. While Pierce County closed the entire county, Mason and Thurston counties began to lift closure restrictions during August.

September produced one new bloom in Island County, which had been very quiet up until that time. Other parts of the state such as South Puget Sound continued to reflect declining bloom conditions, evidenced by lower toxin test results, which allowed for the lifting of closures.

Fourth Quarter 2001

In North Puget Sound, the Island County bloom continued into November, when it peaked at over 1,000 micrograms. A new bloom in Whatcom County affecting the Drayton Harbor area also reached its peak in mid-November. Other late fall blooms occurred in Sequim Bay on the straits, the Port Ludlow area of Jefferson County, North Kitsap County, parts of the San Juan Islands and in Quartermaster Harbor on Vashon Island in Central Puget Sound. All of these late blooms were brief in nature and did not reach very high toxin levels. The rest of the state continued to drop in toxin during the last quarter of 2001.

Staff Changes

New on the scene.....

Jerry Borchert has stepped into the position vacated by Linda Hanson in our Biotoxin Program (see adjacent article). He comes to us from the Department of Fish & Wildlife, where he was performing hatchery work. Welcome to the team Jerry, glad to have you!

Susie Leland is our new Management Analyst in charge of office administration and is primary support for the Office Director. She comes to us from DOH's Division of Emergency Management Trauma Prevention Services and brings with her a wealth of administrative knowledge. Welcome Susie!

Becky Egolf recently transferred to our office from DOH's Medical Quality Assurance Commission. She provides administrative support for our Water Quality Section, calling upon her extensive knowledge of office procedure to perform a variety of tasks quickly and efficiently. Thanks Becky, we're glad you're here!

Michalene Fontana recently joined us from the private sector to help with administrative support functions. She is the face you first see when visiting our office, and the friendly voice answering our main line. Her cheerful, helpful, and efficient manner is appreciated by all who come in contact with her. Welcome to the team, Michalene!

..... And those moving on

Linda Hanson of our Biotoxin program recently retired from state service. Linda is familiar to many of you -- she was responsible for monitoring biotoxin results and notifying growers when results came back from the lab. She and her husband plan to spend their time travelling the country in their motor home. Happy Retirement Linda -- you've earned it!

Chris McCord of our Recreational Shellfish Program transferred to the Department of Health's Drinking Water Division. This move represents a promotion for him. Congratulations Chris!

Michelle Austin, administrative support for the Licensing and Certification Section, also transferred to DOH's Division of Drinking Water. Michelle served as the primary contact for license renewal information and general licensing questions. Best of luck in your new endeavors Michelle!

Danielle Bregent held a temporary position with our office and assisted many staff in an administrative support capacity. A recent graduate of the Evergreen State College, Danielle has secured a permanent position with the Division of Drinking Water. Congratulations on your permanent appointment Danielle!

Stan Iwagoshi, inspector and Tribal Coordinator, has accepted a position with DOH's Facilities and Services Licensing Office. Stan has given over 10 years of dedicated service to our office, and will be missed. Thank you, Stan, for all your hard work, and congratulations on your new position!

Staff Contacts

Jennifer Tebaldi
Office Director ..... (360) 236-3325

Bob Woolrich
Classification/Water Quality..... (360) 236-3329

Judy Dowell
Certification/Biotoxins ..... (360) 236-3313

Other Numbers

General Information ..... (360) 236-3330

FAX ..... (360) 236-2257

Web address ..... www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf

Biotoxin Closures
PSP Hotline ..... (800) 562-5632
PSP Web.... www.doh.wa.gov/ehp/sf/biotoxin.htm

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